# THE SECOND and last part of Conny-catching.

*With new additions containing many merry tales of* all lawes worth the reading, because they are worthy to be remembred.

Discourſing ſtrange cunning in Cooſnage, which if you reade without laughing, Ile giue you my cap for a Noble.

*Mallem nouiſſe quam non prodeſſe patriæ.*

R. G.

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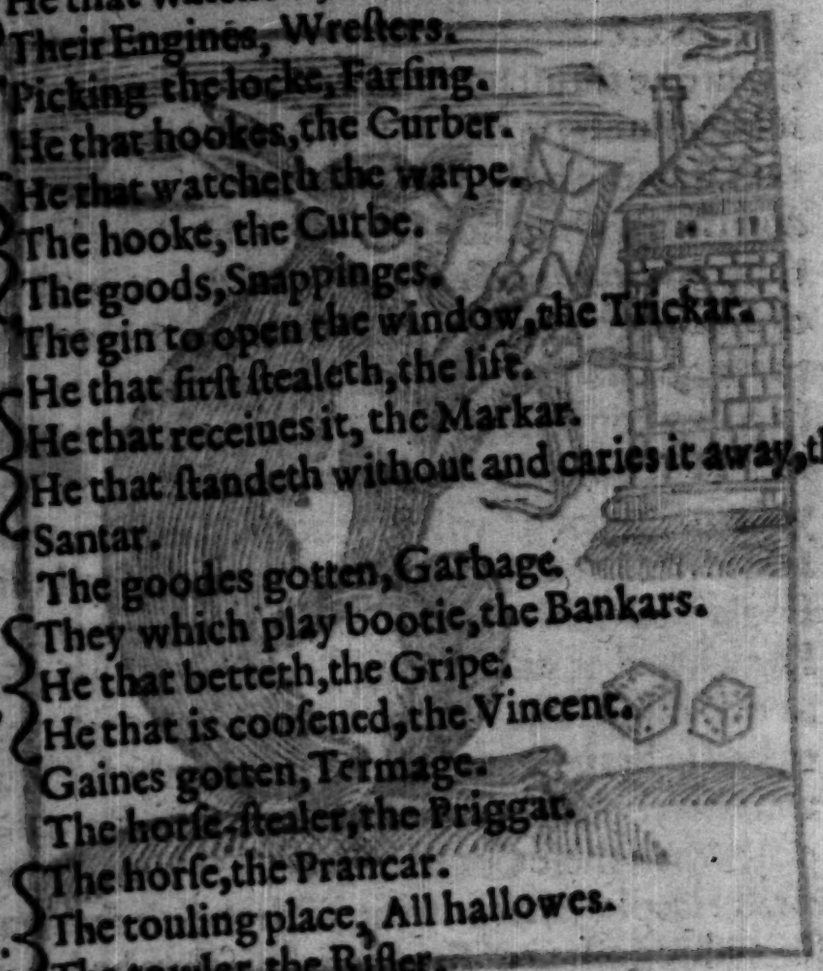

For the foist and the Nip, is in the first Booke.

# TO AL YOONG GENTLMEN,

Marchants, citizens, apprentices, yeomen, *and plaine countrey farmers.*

Health.

WHen *Scæuola*, Gentlemen, saw his native citie besieged by Porsenna, and that Rome the mistresse of the world was readie to be maistred by a professed foe to the publicke estate: hee entred boldly into the enemies camp, and in the Tent of the king (taking him for the king) slew the kings Secretarie, whereupon condemned, brought to the fire, he thrust his right hand into the flame burning it off voluntarie, because it was so infortunat to misse the fatal stab he had intended to his coūtries enimies, and then with an honourable resolution, breathd out this. *Malleni non esse quæ non prodesse patriæ.* This instace of *Scæuola* greatly hath emboldened mee to thinke no pains nor danger too great that groweth to the benefit of my countrie, & though I cannot as he mannadge with my courtlax, nor attempt to vnleager Porsenna: yet with my pen I will indeuour to display the nature and secrets of diuers coosenages more preiudiciall to England then the inuasion of Porsenna was to Rome. For when that valiant king saw the resolutiō of *Scæuola*, as one dismaid at the honour of his thoughtes, he sorrowed so brave a man had so desperatly lost his hand, and thereupon grewe friends with the Romans. But gentlemen these Conny-catchers, these vultures, these fatall Harpies, that putrifie with their infections, this flourishing estate of England, as if they had their con-

sciences sealed with a hot iron, & that as men deliuered vp into a reprobate sence, grace were vtterly exild from their harts, so with the deafe Adder they not only stop their eares against the voice of the charmer, but dissolutely without any sparke of remorse stand vpon their brauados, and openly in words & actions maintain their palpable and manifest coosenages, swearing by no lesse then their enemies bloud, euē by God him selfe, that they will make a massacre of his bones, and cut off my right hand for penning downe their abhominable practises: but alas for the poore snakes, words are wind, & looks but glances: euery thunderclap hath not a bolt, nor euery Conny-catchers oath an execution. I liue still, & I liue to display their villanies, which, gentlemen you shal see set down in most ample maner in this small treatise, but heere by the way, giue me leaue to answere an obiection, that some inferred against me, which was, that I shewed no eloquent phrases, nor fine figuratiue conueiance in my first booke as I had done in other of my workes, to which I reply that ἐν παντὶ a certaine decorum is to bee kept in euerie thing, and not to applie a high stile in a base subiect beside the facultie is so odious, and the men so seruile and slauish minded, that I should dishonor that high misterie of eloquence, and derogate from the dignitie of our English toonge, eyther to employ any figure or bestow one choyce English word vpon such disdained rakehels as those Conny-catchers. Therefore humbly I craue pardon, and desire I may write basely of such base wretches, who liue onely to liue dishonestly. For they seeke the spoyle and ruine of all, and like droanes eate away what others labor for. I haue set downe diuers other laws vntoucht in the first, as their Vincents law, a notable coosenage at bowles, when certain idle companions stand and make bettes, being compacted

with the bowlers, who looke like honeſt minded citizens, either to win or looſe, as their watch-worde ſhall appoint, then the Prigger or Horſeſtealer, with all his ginnes belonging to his trade, and theyr ſubtill cawtels to amend the ſtatute, next the curbing law, which ſome call but too baſely hookers, who eyther diue in at windows, or elſe with a hook, which they call a curb doe fetch out whatſoeuer, either apparell, linnen, or wollen, that be left abroad. Beſide I can ſet downe the ſubtiltie of the blacke Art, which is picking of lockes, a cooſenage as preiudiciall as any of the reſt, and the nature of the Lift, which is he that ſtealeth any parcels, and ſlily taketh them away. This (Gentlemen) haue I ſearcht out for your commodities, that I might lay open to the world, the villanie of theſe cooſening caterpillers, who are not onely abhorred of men, but hated of God, liuing idlely to themſelues, & odiouſly to the worlde, they be thoſe fooliſh children that Salomon ſpeakes of, that feedes themſelues fatte with iniquitie, thoſe vntamed heifers, that will not breake the yoke of labor, but get their liuinges by the painfull thrift of other mens hands. I cannot better compare them, then vnto Vipers, who while they liue are hated & ſhunned of all men as moſt preiudiciall creatures, they feed vpon hemlocke and Aconiton, and ſuch fatall & impoiſoned herbs, but the learned apothecaries takes them, cuts off their heades, and after they be imbowelled of their fleſh, they make the moſt pretious Mithridate: ſo theſe Conny-catchers, Foiſts, Nips, Priggars, & Lifts, while they liue are moſt improfitable members of the common-wealth: they glut themſelues as Vipers vpon the moſt lothſome, and deteſtable ſinnes, ſeeking after folly with greedineſſe, neuer doing any thing that is good, till they be truſt vp at Tiburn: and then is a moſt wholſome Mithridate made of thē, for by their deaths

others are forewarned for falling into the like enormities. And as the Gangrena is a diſeaſe incurable by the cenſure of the Chirurgians, vnleſſe the member where it is fixt be cut off: ſo this vntoward generation of looſe Libertines, can by no wholſome counſailes, nor aduiſed perſwaſions be diſſwaded from their lothſom kind of life, till by death they be fatally, and finally cut off from the common-wealth, whereof ſpake *Ouid* well in his Metamorphoſis.

*Immedicabile vulnus,*
*Enſe reſecandum eſt ne pars ſincera trahatur.*

Sith then this curſed crue, theſe Machauilians, that neither care for God nor deuill, but ſet with the Epicures gaine, and eaſe, their *ſummum bonum* cannot be called to anie honeſt courſe of liuing: if the honorable and worſhipfull of this land looke into their liues, and cut off ſuch vpſtarting ſuckars that conſume the ſap from the roote of the Tree, they ſhall neither looſe their reward in heauen, nor paſſe ouer anie day wherein there wil not be many faithful praiers of the poore, exhibited for their proſperous ſucceſſe and welfare: ſo deepely are theſe monſtrous cooſeners hated in the common wealth. Thus Gentlemen I haue diſcouered in briefe, what I meane to proſecute at large: though not eloquently, yet ſo effectually, that if you be not altogether careleſſe, it may redownd to your commoditie: forewarned, forearmed: burnt children dread the fire, and ſuch as neither counſaile, nor other mens harmes may make to beware, are worthie to liue long, and ſtill by the loſſe. But hoping theſe ſecrets I haue ſet abroach, and my labours I haue taken in ſearching out thoſe baſe villanies, ſhall not be onely taken with thankes, but applied with care: I take my leaue with this farewell. God either confound, or conuert ſuch baſe minded Cooſeners.

Yours R. G.

# A TALE OF A NIP.

I Will tel you, gentlemen, a pleasant tale of a most singuler experienced and approoued Nip, and yet I will not name any, although I coulde discourse of one that is magister in Artibus, both a Nip, and a Foist, and a Crost-biter. But I will tell you a merry Jigge of a notable Nip, named (no more of ỹ if you loue me.) Who taking a proper youth by S. Dauie to his prentice to teach him the order of striking, and foisting: so wel instructed him in his misterie that he could as wel skil of a cuttle-boong as a barber of a raser, and being of a prompt wit, knew his places, persons, and circumstances, as if hée had béene a morall philosopher. The old colte, this graund Cut-purse by Saint Laurence let that suffise, did (as the tale was told to me) supply Mannerings place at the buriall of the olde ladie Rich, and comming thither verie deuout to heare the sermon, thrust with his apprentise amidst ỹ throng, and lighted vpõ a rich parson in Essex not far off from Rochford hundred, the Priest was facst afore with Veluet, & had a good boong, which the Nip espying, began to iustle the priest very hard at the entrance of the doore, and his apprentise stroke the strings, and toke his boong cléere: the Priest litle suspecting it, fell to his praiers, and yet for all his other meditations, he felt for his purse, which when he mist, he fetcht a great sigh, and said, Lord haue mercie vppon me: what ayle you sir, said one that stoode by: nothing said the priest, but I thinke vpon the sinnes of the people, and so past it ouer with silence. Well it so fell out that when the boong came to sharing, the prentise and his maister fel out, and the maister controld him, and said, art not my prentise, and hast not bound thy selfe to me for three yeares? is not thy gettinges my gaines? then why doest stand vpon the Snap? why saies the prentise, brag you so of my yéeres, shall I be made a slaue because I am bound to you: no no, I can quittance my indenture when I list: his maister in a great rage asked how, marry saies the prentise, I will nip a boong, or draw a pocket openly, and so betaken, arraigned, and condemned, and then Bull shall cancell my indentures at Tiburne, and so I will not serue you,

a day

a day after: at this his maister laught, and was glad for further advantage, to yeeld the bucklers to his prentise, and to become frends. For approuing the trueth of this, my self conferd with the Priest, and he told me thus much.

The discouery of the Prigging Law, or nature of horse-stealing.

TO the effecting of this base villany of Prigging or horse-stealing, there must of necessity be two at the least, and that is the Priggar and the Martar. The Priggar is he that steales the horse, and the Martar is he that receiues him, and chops and changeth him away in any Faire, Mart, or other place where any good vent for horses is: and their method is thus. The Priggar if he be a Launce-man, that is, one that is

already

already horst, then he hath more followers with him, and they ride like Gentlemen, and commonly in the forme of Drouers, and so comming into pasture grounds, or inclosures, as if they ment to survey for Cattell, doe take an especiall and perfect view, where prankers or horses be, that are of worth, & whether they haue horse-locks or no, then lie they houering about till fit opertunitie serue, & in the night they take him or them away, and are skilfull in the blacke Art, for picking open the tramels or lockes, and so make hast till they bee out of those quarters. Now if the Priggars steale a horse in Yorkeshire, commonly they haue vent for him in Surrey, Kent, or Sussex, and their Martars that receiue them at his hand, chops them away in some blind Faires after they haue kept them a moneth or two, till the hue and crie be ceast and past ouer. Now if their horse be of any great value, and sore sought after, and so branded or eare-markt, that they can hardly sell him without extreame daunger, either they brand him with a crosse brand vpon the former, or take away his eare-marke, & so keepe him at hard-meat till he be whole, or els sel him in Corne-wall or Wales, if he be in Cumberland, Lincoln-shire, North-folke or Suffolke: but this is, if the horse be of great valour & worthie the keeping: Mary if hee be onely coloured and without brands, they will straight spot him by sundry pollicies, and in a blacke horse, marke saddle spots, or star him in the forehead, and change his taile, which secrets I omit, least I shuld giue too great a light to others to practise such lewd villanies. But againe to our Launce-men Priggars, who as before I saide, cry with the Lapwing farthest from their nest, and from their place of residence, where their most abode is, furthest from thence they steal their horses, and then in another quarter as far of they make sale of them by the Martars means, without it be some base Priggar that steales of mere necessity, and beside is a Trailer. The Trailer is one that goeth on foot, but meanely attired like some plaine gran of the Countrey, walking in a pair of boots without spurs, or els without boots, hauing a long staffe on his necke, and a blacke buckram bag at his back, like some poore client that had some writing in it, and there he hath his saddle, bridle, and spurs, stirhops, & stirhop-

leathers, so quaintly and artificially made, that it may bee put in ỹ flop of a mans hose: for his sadle is made without any tree, yet hath it cantle and bolsters, onely wrought artesicially of cloth and bombast, with foldes to wrap vp in a short rome: his stirhops are made with vices and gins, that one may put them in a paire of glowes, and so are his spurs, & then a litle white leather head-stal and rains, with a small scotish brake or snaffle, all so featlie formed, that as I said before, they may bee put in a buckram bag. Now, this Trailer he bestrides the horse which he priggeth, and saddles and bridles him as orderly as if he were his own, and then carieth him far from that place of his breed, and ther sels him. Oh wil som man say, it is easier to steal a horse then to sel him, considering that her Maiesty & the honorable priuy Counsail, hath in the last Act of Parliament made a strickt statute for horse-stealing, and the sale of horses, whose Prouiso is this: that no man may buy a horse vntould, nor the toule be taken without lawful witnesses, that the party which selleth the horse is the true owner of him, vpon their oath and special knowledg, & that who buyeth a horse without this certificat or prowfe, shalbe within the nature of fellony, as well as the party that stealeth him. To this I aunswere, that there is no act, statute, nor law, so strickt conueid, but there be straight found starting holes to auoid it, as in this. The prigar when he hath stolne a horse, & hath agreed with his Martar, or with any other his confederate, or with an honest person to sel his horse, bringeth to the touler, which they call the rifler, two honest men, either apparelled like cittizens, or plaine countrey yeomen, & they not onely affirme, but offer to depose that they know the horse to be his, vpon their proper knowledg, although perhaps they neuer saw man nor horse before, and these periurde knaues, bee commonly old Knights of the post, that are foisted off from being taken for baile at the Kings bench, or other places, & seeing for open periuries they are refused, there they take that course of life, and are wrongly called querries: but it were necessary, & verie much expedient for the common wealth, that such base rogues should be lookt into, and be punished as well with the pillory, as the other with the halter. And thus haue I reuealed the nature of Priggars or horse-stelers,

briefly,

briefly, which if it may profit, I haue my desire, but that I may recreat your minds with a pleasant historie, marke the sequel

A pleasant storie of a horse-stealer.

NOt far from Tenro in Cornwel, a certain prigar, a horse-stealer being a lance-man, surueying the pastures thereabouts, spied a faire blacke horse without any white spot at al about him, the horse was fair and lusty, wel proportioned, of a high crest, of a lusty countenance, well buttokt, & strongly trust, which set the priggars téeth a water to haue him: wel he knew the hardest hap was but a halter, & therefore he ventred faire, and stole away the prauncer: and seeing his stomacke was so good as his limbs, he kept him wel, and by his policy seared him in the forehead, and made him spotted in the backe, as if he had bin sadle bitten, and gaue him a marke in both eares, whereas he had but a marke in one. Dealing thus with his horse, after a quarter of a yere, that al hurly burly was past for the horse, he came riding to Tenro to the market, and there offered him to be sold: the gentleman that lost the horse was there present, and loking on him with other gentlemen, likte him passing well, and commended him, in so much that hee bet the price of him, bargained, & bought him: and so when hee was tould, and the horse-stealer clapt him good lucke: wel my frend quoth the gentleman, I like the horse the better, in that once I lost one, as like him as might be, but ỳ mine wanted these sadle spots, and his star in the forehead. It may be so sir said the priggar, & so the gentleman and he parted. The next day after, he caused a letter to be made, and sent the gentleman word that hee had his horse againe that he lost, only he had giuen him a mark or two, and for that hee was well rewarded, hauing twentie marke for his labour. The gentleman hearing how hee was cosened by a horse-stealer, and not only robd, but mockt, let it passe till hee might conueniently méete with him to reuenge it. It fortuned not long after, that this Launce-man prigar was brought to Tenro Gaile for some such matter, and indéed it was about a mare that he had stolne: but as knaues haue friends, especially when they are well monied, he found diuers that spake for him, and who sayde it was the first fault, and the party plaintife gaue but slender euidence against him, so that the Iudge spake fauourably in his behalfe: the Gentle-

man as then sat on the bench, & calling to mind the Priggars countenance, how hee had stolne his horse and mockt him, remembred he had the letter in his pocket that he sent him, and therfore rising vp, spake in his behalf, and highly commended the man, and desired the Iudges for one fault he might not be cast away, & besides, may it please you (quoth hee) I had this morning a certificate of his honestie and good behauiour sent me, and with that he deliuered them the letter, and the Iudge with the rest of the bench, smiled at this conceit, and askt the fellow if he neuer stole a horse from that gentleman: no quoth the Priggar, I know him not, your honors mistakes mee: sayd the gentleman, he did borrow a black horse of me, & markt him with a starre in the forehead, and askt twenty marke of mee for his labour, and so discourst the whole matter: where-vpon the quest went vpon him, and condemned him, and so the priggar went to heauen in a string, as many of his faculty had von before.

## The vincents Law, with the discouery therof.

THe Vincents Law is a common deceit or cosenage vsed in Bowling-allies, amongst the baser sort of people, ỳ commonlie haunt such lewd and vnlawfull places, for although I will not discommend altogether the nature of bowling, if the time, place, person and such necessary circumstances be obserued: yet as it is now vsed, practised and suffered, it groweth altogether to the maintenance of vnthrifts, that idlely and disorderly make that recreation a cosenage. Now the manner and forme of their deuise is thus effected: the Bawkers, for so the common hanters of the Ally are tearmed, aparelled like very honest and substantiall cittizens come to bowle, as though rather they did it for sport then gaines, and vnder that colour of carelesnes, do shadow their pretended knauery: wel to bowls they go, and then there resort of all sortes of people to beholde them, some simple men brought in of purpose by som cosening companions, to be stript of his crownes, others, Gentlemen, or Marchants, that delighted with the sport, stand there as beholders to passe away the time: amongst these are certaine old lokers, which are lokers on, and listen for bets, either euen or vd, and these are called Gripes: and these fellowes will refuse no lay, if the ods may grow to their aduantage, for the gripes

and the bawkers are confederate, and their fortunes at play euer sorts according as the gripes haue placed their bets, for the Bawker, he marketh how the laies goes, and so he throes his casting, so that note this, the bowlers cast euer booty, and both win or lose as the bet of the gripe leadeth them: for suppose 7. be vp for the game, and the one hath three and the other none, then the vincent, for that is the simple man that stands by, and not acquainted with their cosenage, nor doth so much as once imagine that the bawkers which cary the countenance of honest substantial men, would by any meanes or for any gaines, be perswaded to play booty. Well, this vincent (for so the cosoners or gripes please to tearme him) seeing three to none, beginneth to offer ods on that side that is fairest to win: what ods saies the gripe? three to one saies the vincent, no saies the gripe it is more, and with that they come to foure for none, then the vincent offers to lay 4. to one, I take six to one saies the gripe, I lay it saies the vincent, and so they make a bet of some sixe crownes, shillings, or pence, as the vincent is of ability to lay, and thus wil sundrie take their ods of him: wel, then the bawkers goe forward with their bowles, and win another cast, which is fiue, then the vincent growes proud, and thinks both by the ods and goodnes of the play, that it is impossible for his side to loose, and therefore takes and laies bets freely, then the bawkers fortune begins to change, and perhaps they come to three for fiue, and still as their lucke changes, diuersity of bets growes on, till at last it comes to fiue & fiue, and then the gripe comes vpon the vincent and offers him ods, which if the vincent take, he loseth all, for vpon what side the gripe laies, that side euer wins, howe great soeuer the ods bee at the first in the contrary part, so that the cosenage growes in playing booty, for the gripe and the bawker meet together at night, and there they share what soeuer tearmage they haue gotten, for so they call the money that the poore vincent loseth vnto them. Now, to shadow the matter the more, the bawker that wins and is afore-hand with the game, will lay franckly that he shall win, and will bet hard, and lay great ods, but with whome? either with them which play with him, that are as crafty knaues as himselfe, or els with the gripe, & this makes the vincent stoop to the blow, and to loose al the money in his purse. Besides, if

any honeſt men that holdes themſelues ſkilfull in bowling, offer to play any ſet match againſt theſe common Bawkers, if they feare to haue the woꝛſe, oꝛ ſuſpect the others play to bee better then theirs, then they haue a tricke in watering of the alley, to giue ſuch a moiſture to the banke, that hee that offers to ſtrike a bowle with a ſhoꝛe, ſhall neuer hit it whileſt hee liues, becauſe the moiſture of the banke hinders the pꝛopoꝛtion of his aiming.

Diuers other pꝛactiſes there are in bowling tending vnto coſenage, but the greateſt is booty, and therfoꝛe would I wiſh all men that are carefull of their coyne, to beware of ſuch coſeners, & none to come in ſuch places, where a haunt of ſuch hel-rakers are reſident, & not in any wiſe to ſtope to their bets, leaſt he be made a vincent, foꝛ ſo manifeſt & palpable is their coſenage, that I haue ſéene men ſtone-blinde offer to lay bets ſcanckly, although they can ſée a bowl no moꝛe then a poſt, but onely hearing who plaies, and how the old Gripes make their lais: ſéeing then as the game is abuſed to a deceit, that is made foꝛ an honeſt recreation, let this little be a caueat foꝛ men to haue an inſight into their knauerie.

For the Foiſt and the Nip, as in the firſt booke.

THe professors of this law, being somwhat dasht, and their trade greatly impouerished, by the late editions of their secret villanies, seeke not a new meanes of life, but a new method how to fetch in their Conies, and to play their prancks: for as greeuous is it for them to let slip a country farmer come to the terme, that is wel aparelled, & in a dirty paire of boots, (for that is a token of his new comming vp, & a full purse) as it was for the boies of Athens, to let Diogenes passe by without a hisse. But ỳ country men hauing had partly a caueat for their cosenage, feare their fauorable speeches & their curteous salutations, as deadly as the Greeks did ỳ whistle of Poliphemus. The cony-catcher now no sooner commeth in company, & calleth for a paire of cards, but straight the poore cony smoaks him & sais: Maisters, I bought a booke of late for a groat, ỳ warnes me of Card-play, least I fall among Conny-catchers. What, dost thou thinke vs to be such, saies the verser? no Gentlemen saies the Conny, you may be men of honest disposition, but yet pardon me, I haue forsworne cards euer since I read it: at this reply, God wot, I haue many a coosening curse at these Conny-catchers hands, but I solemnly sticke to the olde prouerbe: the Fore, the more he is curst, the better hee fares: but yet I will discouer some of their newest deuises, for these caterpillers resemble the Syrens, who sitting with their watching eies vppon the rockes, to allure Sea-passengers to their extreame prejudice, sound out most heauenly melodie in such pleasing cords, that who so listens to their harmony, lends his eare vnto his own bane & ruine: but if any wary Ulisses passe by and stop his eares against their inchauntments, then haue they most delightfull iewels to shew him, as glorious obiects to inueigle his eie with such pleasant vanities, that comming more nigh to beholde them, they may dash their ship against a rocke and so vtterly perish. So these Conny catchers, for that I smoakt them in my last booke, and laid open their plots & policies, wherewith they drew poore connies into their hay, seeking with the Orators Beneuolentiam captare, & as they vse rethorical tropes and figures, the better to draw their hearers with the delight of variette: so these moathes of the Commonwealth, apply their wits to wrappe in wealthy farmers with

strange

strange and vncoth conceits. Tush, it was so easie for the Setter to take vp a Cony before I discouered their cosenage, that one stigmaticall shameles companion amongst the rest, would in a brauerie weare parsly in his hat, and said, he wanted but Aqua vitæ to take a cony with, but since he hath lookt vpon his feet, and baled his plumes with the peacock, and swears by all the shoes in his shop, I shall be the next man he means to kil, for spoyling of his ocupation: but I laugh at his brauados, and though he speaks with his Enuches voice, and weares a long sword like a morice pike, were it not I thinke he would with Batillus hang himselfe at my inuective, his name should be set downe, with the nature of his follies: but let him cal himselfe home from this course of life, and this cosenage, and I shall be content to shadow what he is with pardon, but from this digression again, to the double diligence of these Cony-catchers whose new sleights, because you shal the more easily perceiue, I will tell you a storie pleasant and worth the noting.

A pleasant tale of a horse, how at Vxbridge he cosened a Cony-cacher, and had like to brought him to his neckeuerse.

IT fortuned that not long since, certaine Conny-cachers met by hap, a Prauker or horse-stealer at Vxbridge, who took vp his Inne where those honest crue lodged, and as one vice followes another, was as ready to haue a cast at cards, as he had a hazard at a horse: the Conny-cachers who supt with him, feeling him pliant to receiue the blow, began to lay the plot how they might make him stoope all the money in his purse, and so for a pint of wine drewe him in at cardes, by degrees as these rake-hels do, Lento gradu, measure all things by minutes, he fell from wine to money, and from pence to pounds, that hee was stript of all that euer he had, as well crownes, apparel, as iewels: that at last to maintaine the maine, and to check vies with reuies, he laid his horse in the hazard and lost him: when the priggar had smoakt the game, and perceiued he was bitten of all the bite in his bung, and turned to walke penny-lesse in Mark-lane, as the prouerb is, he began to chafe, and to swear, and to rap out gogs Mownes, and pronounes, while at voluntarie hee had sworne through the eight parts of speach in the

Accidence,

Accidence, anowing that they had cosened him both of his money and horse. Whereupon the grosse Asse more hardy then wise, vnderstanding the Conny-catchers were gone, went to the Constable and made hue and crie after them, saying: They had robd him of his horse: at this the Headborowes followed amaine, and by chaunce met with another hue and cry that came for him that had stollen, which hue and crie was serued vpon the horse-stealer, and at that time as farre as I can eyther coniecture or calculate, the Conny-catchers were taken suspicious for the same horse, and the rather for that they were found lose liuers, and could yeeld no honest methode or means of their maintenance, vppon this, for the horse they were apprehended, and bound ouer to the Sessions at Westminster, to answere what might be obiected against them in her Maiesties behalfe. Well, the horse-stealer brake from his keepers, and got away, but the rest of the rascall crue, the Conny-catchers I meane, were brought to the place of iudgment, and there like valiant youthes. they thrust twelue men into a corner, who found them guiltlesse for the fact, but if great fauour had not bene shewen, they had beene condemned, and burnt in the eares for rogues. Thus the horse-stealer made hue and crie after the Conny-catchers, and the man that had lost the horse, he pursued the horse-stealer, so that a double hue and crie passed on both sides, but the Conny catchers had the worse, for what they got in the bridle they lost in the saddle, what they cosened at cards, had like to cost them their neckes at the Sessions, so that when they were free and acquitted, one of the Conny-catchers in a merry vaine, said, he had cacht many Connies, but now a horse had like to caught him, and so deepely quoth hee, that Miserere mei, had like to haue beene my best mattins. Thus wee may see, Fallere fallentem non est fraus, euery deceit hath his due, he that maketh a tray, falleth into the snare himselfe, and such as couet to cosen all, are crost themselues oftentimes almost to the crosse, and that is y next neighbour to the gallows. Wel Gentlemen, thus I haue bewraied much and got litle thankes, I meane of the dishonest sort. but I hope such as measure vertue by her honours, will iudge of me as I deserue. Marry the goodman Conny-catchers,

those base excrements of dishonesty, report they haue got one, ( )I will not bewray his name, but a scholler they say he is, to make an inuective against me, in that he is a fauourer of those base reprobats: but let them, him, and al know, the proudest pesant of them all, dare not lift his plumes in disparagement of my credit, for if he do, I will for reuenge only appoint the iakes-farmers of London, who shall case them in their filthy vessels, and carry them as dong to manure the baren places of Tiborne, and so for Conny-catchers an end.

A discourse, or rather discouery of a Nip and the Foist, laying open the nature of the Cutpurse and Pickpocket.

NOw Gentlemen, Marchants, Farmers, and Yearmers, yea whatsoeuer he be that vseth to cary money about him, let him attentiuely heare what a peece of new-found Philosophie, I will lay open to you whose opinions, principles, aphorismes, if you carefully note and retaine in memory, perhaps saue some crownes in your purse ere the yeare passe, and therfore thus: The nip and the foyst, although their subiect is one

which

which they worke on, that is, a well lined purse, yet their maner is different, for the nip vseth his knife, the foist his hand: the one cutting the purse, the other drawing the pocket: but of these two scuruy trades, the Foist holdeth himself of the highest degree, and therefore, they tearme themselues Gentlemen foists, and so much disdaine to be called Cut-purses, as the honest man that liues by his hand or occupation, in so much that the Foist refuseth euen to weare a knife about him to cut his meat withal, lest he might be suspected to grow into the nature of the nip, yet as I said before is their subiect and haunt both a like, for their gaines lies by all places of resort and assemblies therefore their chiefe walkes is Paules, westminster, the exchange, Plaies, Bear-garden, running at Tilt, the L. Maiors day, any festiuall métings, fraies, shootings, or great faires: to bee short, whersoeuer is any extraordinary resort of people, there the nip and the foist haue fittest opportunity to shew their iugling agility. Commonly, when they spy a Farmer or marchant, whome they suspect to be well monied, they follow him hard vntill they see him drawe his purse, then spying in what place he puts it vp, the stall or shadow being with the Foist or Nip, méets the man at some straight turne, and iustles him so hard, that the man marueiling, and perhaps quarrelling with him, the whilest the foist hath his purse, and bids him farwel. In Paules (especially in the tearme time) betwéene x. and xi. then is their howers, and there they walke, and perhaps, if there be great preese, strike a stroke in the middle walke, but that is vppon some plaine man that stands gazing about, hauing neuer séene the Church before, but their chiefest time is at diuine seruice, when men deuoutly giuen do go vp to heare either a sermon, or els the harmony of the Muére and the Organes: there the nip and the foist as deuoutly as if he were some zealous person, standeth soberly with his eies eleuated to heauen, when his hand is either on the purse or in the pocket, surueying euery corner of it for coyne, then when the seruice is done, & the people prese away, he thrusteth amidst the throng, and there worketh his villanie. So likewise in the markets, they note how euery one putteth vp his purse, and thereeither in a great preese, or while the partie is cheapning of meat, the

foist is in their pocket, & the Nip hath the purse by the strings, or sometimes cuts out the bottome, for they haue still their stals following them, who thrusteth or iustleth him or her where the foist is about to draw: So likewise at Plaies, the nip standeth there leaning like some mannerly gentleman against the doore as men go in, and there finding talke with some of his companions, spieth what euery man hath in his purse, & wher in what place, and in which sleeue or pocket he puts the boung, and according to that so hee worketh, either where the thrust is great within, or els as they come out of the doores: but suppose that the first is smoakt, and the man misseth his purse, and aprehendeth him for it, then straight he either conueith it to his stall, or els droppeth the boung, and with a great braue, he defieth his accuser: and though the purse be found at his feet yet because hee hath it not about him, hee comes not within compasse of life.

Thus haue they their shifts for the Lawe, and yet at last so long the pitcher goeth to the broke that it commeth broken home: and so long the foists put their villanie in practise, that West-ward they goe, and there solemnly make a rehearsall sermon at tiborne. But againe to their places of resort, Westminster, I marry, that is the chiefest place that brings in their profite, the tearm-time is their haruest, and therfore like prouident husbandmen, they take time while time serues, & make hay while the sun shines, following their clients, for they are at the Hall very early, and there worke like bees, haunting euery court, as the Exchecker-chamber, the Starchamber, the kings bench, common-plees, and euery place where the poore client standeth to heare his Lawier handle his matter, for the poore man is so busied with his causes, and so carefull to see his counsell, and to ply his Attorney, that hee thinketh least of his purse, but the Foist or Nip he watcheth, and seing the client draw his purse to pay some charges or fees necessary for the court, marketh where he putteth it, and then when hee thrusteth into the throng, either to answere for himselfe, or to stand by his Counseller to put him in minde of his cause, the Foyst drawes his pocket and leaues the poore client penilesse. This do they in al courts, and go disguised like seruing-men wring-

ing

ing the simple people by this iugling subtilty: well might therfore the Honourable and Worshipfull of those Courtes doe, to take order for such vilde and base-minded Cut-purses, that as the Lawe hath prouided death for them, if they bee taken, so they might bee rooted out, and especiallie from Westminster, where the poore Clients are vndone by such Rogish catchers.

It boots not to tell their course at euerie remoue of her Maiestie, when the people flock together, nor at Bartholmew Faire, on the Quéenes day at the Tilt-yard, and at all other places of assemblie: for let this suffice, at any great presse of people or méeting: There the foist and the Nip is in his kingdome. Therefore let all men take this caueat, that when they walke abroad amid any of the forenamed places, or like assemblies, that they take great care for their purse, how they place it, and not leaue it careleste in their pockets or hose, for the Foist is so nimble-handed, that he excéds the iugler for agilitie, and hath his legiar de maine as perfectly. Therefore an exquisite Foist must haue three properties that a good Surgeon should haue, and that is, an Eagles eie, a Ladies hand, and a Lions heart. An Eagles eie to spy out a purchase, to haue a quicke insight where the bound lies, and then a Lions heart, not to feare what the end will bee, and then a Ladies hande to be little and nimble, the better and the more easie to dive into any mans pocket.

These are the perfect properties of a Foist: but you must note that there be diuersities of this kind of people, for ther be Citty Nips and Countrey Nippes, which haunt from faire to faire, and neuer come in London vnlesse it be at Bartholmew faire, or some other great and extraordinarie assemblies Now there is a mortall hate betwéene the country foist and the city foist: for if ỳ city foist spy one of the country foists in London, straight he séeks by som means to smoke him. And so the countrey Nip, if he spy a Citty Nip in any faire, then hee smoakes him straight, and brings him in danger if he flée not away the more spédilie. Beside, there be women Foists, and women Nippes, but the woman foyst is the most dangerous, for commonly there is some olde Bawde, or Snout-faire strumpette,

who inueigleth either some ignorant man, or some yong youth to folly, shee hath straight her hand in the pocket, and so foists him of all that he hath. But let all men take heed of such common harlots, who either sit in the streets in the euenings, or els dwel in bawdy houses, and are pliant to euery mans lure. Such are alwaies Foists and Pickpockets, and seek the spoile of all such as meddle with them, and in cosening of such base-minded leachers, as giue themselues to such lewd companie, are worthy of whatsoeuer befalles, and sometimes they catch such a spanish pip, that they haue no more hair on their heads. then on their nailes.

But leauing such Strumpets to their soules confusion, and bodies correction in Bride-wel: Againe to our nips and foists, who haue a kind of fraternity or brother-hood amongst them, hauing a hall or place of meeting, where they confer of waighty matters touching their workemanship, for they are prouident in that, euery one of them hath some trustie frend whome he calleth his Treasurer, and with him hee laies vp some ratable portion of euery purse hee drawes, that when neede requires, and he is brought in danger, hee may haue money to make composition with the partie. But of late there hath bin a great scourge fallen among them: for now if a purse be drawen of any great value, straight the party maketh freindes to some one or other of the Counsell, or other inferior her Maiesties Iustices, and then they send out warrants if they cannot learne who the Foist is, to the keepers of Newgate, that they take vp all the nips and foists about the Citty, and let them lie there while the money be reanswered vnto the partie, so that some pay three pound, nay fiue pound at a time, according as the same losse did amount vnto, which doth greatly impouerish their trade, and is likewise an hinderaunce to their figging law.

Therefore about such causes grow their meetings, for they haue a kind of corporation, as hauing Wardens of their company, and a hall. I remember their Hall was once about Bishopsgate, neere vnto Fishers folly, but because it was a noted place, they haue remoued it to Kent-street, and as far as I can learne, it is kept at one Laurence Pickerings house, one that

hath

hath bene, if he be not still, a notable Foist. A man of good calling he is, and well allied, brother in law to Bul the hangman. There kéep they their feasts and wéekly méetings, fit for their company.

Thus haue I partly set downe the nature of the Foist, and the Nippe, with their special haunts, as a caueat to all estates to beware of such wicked persons, who are as preiudiciall vnto the Common-wealth, as any other faculty whatsoeuer: and although they be by the great discretion of the Iudges and Iustices daily trust vp, yet still there springeth vp yong that grow in time to beare fruit fit for the gallows: let then euery man be as carefull as possiblie he may: and by this caueat take héed of his purse, for the pray makes the théefe, and there and end.

A merrie tale, how a Miller had his purse cut in Newgat-market.

IT fortuned that a Nip and his skaull drinking at the three tuns in Newgate market, sitting in one of the roomes next to the stréet, they might perceiue where a meal-man stood selling of meale, and had a large bag by his side, where by coniecture was some store of mony: the old cowl, the old cut-purse I mean, spying this, was delighted with the shew of so glorious an obiect, for a full purse is as pleasing to a cutpurse eie, as the curious phisnomy of Venus was to the amorous God of warre: and entring to a mery vain (as one that counted that purchase his own) discouered it to the nouice, and bad him go and nip it: the young toward scholler, although perhaps hee had striken som few strokes before, yet séeing no great preas of people, & the meal-mans hand often vpon his bag, as if he had in times past smokt some of their facultie, was halfe afraid, and doubted of his own experience, and so refused to do it. Away villaine said the old nip, art thou faint harted, belongs it to our trade to dispaire? if thou wilt onely do common worke, and not make experience of some hard matters to attempt, thou wilt neuer be maister of thine occupation, therefore trie thy wits and doe it. At this the yong strippling stalks me out of the Tauerne, and féeling if his cuttle bong were glib and of a good edge, went to this meal-man to enter combat hand to hand with his purse: but séeing the meal-mans eie was still abroad, and for want of other sport that he plaid with his purse, he was afraid to trust

either

either to his wit or fortune, and therefore went backe againe without any act atchieued. How now saith the old Nip, what hast thou done? nothing qd. hee the knaue is so wary, that it is vnpossible to get any purchase there, for hee standes playing with his purse for want of other exercise. At this his fellowe lookes out and smiles, making this reply, and doost thou count it impossible to haue the meal-mans boung? lend me thy knife, for mine is left at home, and thou shalt see me strike it straight, and I will shew thée a method, how perhaps hereafter to do the like by my example, and to make thée a good scholler, and therefore go with me, and do as I shal instruct thée, begin but a fained quarrel, and when I giue thée a watch-word, then throwe flower in my face, and if I do misse his purse, let me be hanged for my labour: with that hee gaue him certaine principles to obserue, and then paid for the wine, and out they went together. Assone as they were come vnto the meal-man, the old Nip began to iest with the other about the Millers sacke, and the other replied as knauishly. At last the elder called the younger Rogue. Rogue, thou Swaine quoth he, doest thou, or darest thou dishonour me with such a base title? And with that taking a whole handfull of meale out of the sacke, threw it ful in the olde Nips necke, and his brest, and then ranne his way. He being thus dusted with meale, intreated the meale-man to wipe it out of his necke, and stoupt down his head. The meal-man laughing to see him so raied and whited, was willing to shake off the meale, and the whilest hee was busie about that, the Nip had stroken the purse and done his feat, and both curteouslie thanked the meale-man, and closely went away with his purchase. The poze man thinking little of this cheat, began againe to play with his purse strings, and suspected nothing till he had sold a peck of meale and offered for to change money, and then he found his purse bottomlesse, which stroke such a quandary to his stomacke, as if in a frostie morning hee had drunke a draught of small bere next his heart, hee began then to exclaime against such villains, and cald to minde, how in shaking the dust out of the Gentlemans necke, hee shaked his money out of his purse, and so the poze meal-man fetcht a great sigh, knit vp his sacke and went sorrowing home.

## A kinde conceit of a Foist performed in Paules.

VVHile I was writing this discouery of foysting, & was desirous of any intelligence that might be giuen mee, a Gentleman, a friend of mine, reported vnto me this pleasant tale of a foist, and as I well remember it grewe to this effect. There walked in the midle walke a plaine Country farmer, a man of good wealth, who had a well lined purse, onely barelie thrust vp in a round slop. which a crue of foists hauing perceiued, their hearts were set on fire to haue it, & euery one had a fling at him, but all in vaine, for he kept his hand close in his pocket, and his purse fast in his fist like a subtil churle, that either had bene forewarnd of Pauls, or els had aforetime smokt some of that faculty. Well, howsoeuer it was impossible to do any good with him he was so warie. The foists spying this, strained their wits to the highest string how to compasse this boung, yet could not al their politike conceits fetch the farmer ouer, for iustle him, chat with him, offer to shake him by the hand, all would not serue to get his hand out of his pocket. At last one of the crue that for his skill might haue bene Doctorat in his misterie, amongst them all choose out a good foist, one of a nimble hand and great agility, and said to the rest thus: Masters it shall not be said such a base pesant shall slip away from such a crue of Gentlemen foists as wee are, and not haue his purse drawen, and therefore this time Ile play the staull my selfe, and if I hit him not home, count mee for a bungler for euer, and so left them and went to the farmer and walkt directly before him and next him three or foure turnes, at last standing still, he cried alas honest man helpe mee, I am not well, & with that sunck down suddenly in a sown, the poore Farmer seeing a proper yong Gentleman (as hee thought) fall dead afore him, stept to him, held him in his armes, rubd him & chaft him: at this there gathered a great multitude of people about him, and the whilest the Foist drewe the farmers purse and away: by that the other thought the feat was done, he began to come something to himselfe againe, and so halfe staggering, stumbled out of Paules, and went after the crue where they had appointed to meet, and their boasted of his wit and experi-

ence. The farmer little suspecting this villany, thrust his hād into his pocket and mist his purse, searcht for it, but lining and shels & all was gone, which made the Country man in a great maze, that he stood stil in a dumpe so long, that a Gentleman perceiuing it asked what he aild: what aile I sir quoth he, truly I am thinking how men may long as wel as women, why doest thou coniecture that honest man quoth he? marry sir answers the farmer, the gentleman euen now that sowned heer, I warrant him breeds his wiues childe, for the cause of his sodaine qualme that he fel down dead grew of longing: the gentleman demanded how he knew that, wel enough sir quoth he and hee hath his longing too, for the poore man longed for my purse, and thanks be to God he hath it with him. At this al the hearers laught, but not so merrily as the foist and his fellows that then were sharing his money.

## A quaint conceit of a Cutler and a Cutpurse.

A Nip hauing by fortune lost his cutle boung, or hauing not one fit for his purpose, went to a cunning Cuttler to haue a new made, and prescribed the Cutler such a method and form to make his knife and the fashion to bee strong, giuing such a charge of the finenes of the temper, and setting of the edge, that the Cuttler wondred what the Gentleman would do with it, yet because he offered so largely for the making of it, the cutler was silent and made few questions, onely he appointed them the time to come for it, and that was three daies after: wel, the time being expired, the gentleman nip came, & seeing his knife liked it passing wel, and gaue him his money with aduantage. The Cutler desirous to knowe to what vse hee would put it, saide to the Cutpurse thus, sir quoth hee I haue made many knines in my daies, and yet I neuer saw any of this forme, fashion, temper, or edge, and therefore if without offence I pray you tell me how or to what will you vse it?

While thus he stood talking with the nip, he spying ỳ purse in his apron, had cut it passing cunningly, and then hauing his purchase close in his hand, made answer, in faith my friend, to dissemble is folly, tis to cut a purse withal, and I hope to haue good handsel: you are a merry gentleman quoth the Cutler, I

tell

tel true qd, the cutpurse and away he goes. No sooner was hée gone from the stall, but came another and bought a knife, and should haue single money again, the cutler thinking to put his hand in his bag, thrust it quite through at the bottome, all his money was gone and the purse cut: perceiuing this, & remembring how the man praid he might haue good handsel, he fetcht a great sigh, & said, now I sée, hee that makes a snare, first fals into it himselfe. I made a knife to cut other mens purses, and mine is the first handsell, well, reuenge is fallen vpon me, but I hope the rope will fall vpon him, and so hee smoothed vp the matter to himself, least men should laugh at his strange fortune

## The discouery of the Lifting Law.

THe Lift, is he that stealeth or prowleth any plate, iewels, boults of saten, velvet, or such parcels from any place by a sleight conueance vnder his cloke, or so secretly that it may not be espied: of lifts there be diuers kinds as there natures be different, some base rogues, ỳ lift when they com into alehouses, quart pots, platters, clokes, swords, or any such paltry trash. which commonly is called pilfering or petulacery, for vnder ỳ collor of spending two or thrée pots of ale, they lift away any thing that commeth within the compasse of their reach, hauing a fine & nimble agility of the hand as the foist had: these ar the common and raskall sort of lifts, but the higher degrées & gentlemen lifts haue to the performance of their faculty 3. parties of necessity: the Lift, the Marker, & the Santar: the lift attired in the forme of a ciuill Countrey Gentleman, comes with the Marker into some mercers shop, haberdashers, goldsmiths, or any such place where any particular parcels of worth are to be conuaid, and there he cals to sée a boult of Saten, velvet, or any such commoditie, and not liking the pile, culler or bracke, he cals for more, & the whiles he begins to resolue which of thē most fitly may be lifted, and what Garbage (for so he cals the goods stolne) may be most easilie conuaid, then he calles to the Mercers man and sais, sirrha, reach me that péece of velvet or satten, or that iewell, chaine, or péece of plate, and whilest the fellow turns his back, he commits his garbage to the marker:

for note, the Lift is without his cloake, in his doublet and hose to auoid the more suspition: The Parker which is the receyuer of the Lifts luggage, giue a winke to the Santar that walkes before the window, and then the Santar going by in great hast, the Parker cals him and saies, sir a word with you I haue a message to do vnto you from a verie friend of yours, and the errand is of some importance: truly sir saies the santar I haue verie vrgent busines in hand, and as at this time I cannot stay, but one woorde and no more saies the Parker, and then hee deliuers him whatsoeuer the Lift hath conuaied vnto him, and then the Santar goes his way, who neuer came within the shop, and is a man vnknowen to them all: suppose he is smoakt and his lifting lokt into, then are they vpon their pantophels, because there is nothing found about them: they defie the wold for their honestie, because they be as dishonest as any in the world, and sweare as God shall iudge them they neuer saw the parcel lost, but oathes with them like wind out of a bellowes, which being cole kindleth fire, so their vowes are without conscience, and so they call for reuenge: Therefore let this be a caueat to all occupations, sciences and misteries, that they beware of the Gentleman Lift, and to haue an eie to such as cheapen their wares, and not when they call to se new stuffe to leaue the old behinde them, for the fingers of Lifts are fourmed of Adamant, though the ytouch not, yet they haue vertue attractiue to draw any pelfe to them, as the adamant doth the Iron. But yet these Lifts haue a subtill shift to blinde the world, for this close kind of coosenage they haue when they want money: one of them apparels himselfe like a a Countrey Farmer, and with a Memorandum drawen in some legall forme, comes to the chamber of some Counsailer or Sargeant at Lawe, with his Parker and his Santar, and there tels the Lawyer his case and desires his counsaile, the whilest the Parker and the Santar lay the platforme for any rapier, dagger, cloake, gowne, or any parcell of worth, that is in the withdrawing or vtter chamber, and assone as they haue it they go their way: then whē the lawier hath giuen his opinion of the case the lift requires, then hee puts in some demurre or blind, and saies he will haue his cause better discoue-

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red and then he wil come to his worship againe, so taking his leaue without his ten shillings fée, he goes his waies to share what his cõpanions haue gottẽ: the like method they vse with Scriueners, for comming by the shop and séeing any garbage worth the lifting, one starteth in to haue an obligation or bill made in hast, and while the Scriuener is busie, the Lift bringeth the marker to the blow, & so the luggage is caried away. Now, these Lifts haue their speciall receiuers of their stolne goods, which are two sundrie parties, either some notorious Bawds in whose houses they lie, and they kéepe commonlie tapping houses, and haue yong trugs in their house which are consorts to these Lifts and loue them so déere, that they neuer leaue them till they come to the gallows, or els they bee Brokers, a kind of idle sort of leud liuers, as pernitious as the lift, for they receiue at their hands whatsoeuer Garbage is conuaied, be it linnen, wollen, plate, Jewels, and this they doe by a bill of sale, making the bill in the name of John a Nokes or John a Stiles, so that they shadow the Lift, & yet kéepe themselues without the danger of the law. Thus are these brokers and bawds as it were, efficient causes of the Lifters villany, for were it not their alluring spéeches, and their secret consealings, the Lift for want of receiuers should bee faine to take a new course of life, or els bee continually driuen into great extreames for selling his garbage: and thus much briefly for the nature of the lift.

## The discouery of the courbing law.

The Courber, which the common people call the Hooker, is he that with a Curb (as they tearm it) or hook, doth pul out of a window any lose linnen cloth, apparell, or els any other houshold stuffe whatsoeuer, which stolne parcels, they in their Art cal snappings: to the performance of this law there be required, duly two persons, the Curber and the Warpe: the curber his office is to spy in the day time fit places wher his trade may be practised at night, and comming vnto anie window if it be open, then he hath his purpose, if shut, then growing into the nature of the blacke Art, hath his trickers, which are en-

engins of Iron so cunningly wrought, that he wil cut a barre of Iron in two with them so easily, that scarcely shal the standers by heare him: then when hee hath the window open and spies any fat snappinges worth the Curbing, then streight he sets the Warp to watch, who hath a long cloke to couer what soeuer he gets: then doth the other thrust in a long hooke some nine foote in length (which he calleth a curbe) that hath at the end a crooke, with three tynes turned contrary, so that tis vnpossible to misse, if there be any snappinges abroad. Nowe this long hooke they call a Curbe, and because you shall not woonder how they carrie it for being spied, know this, that it is made with ioyntes like an angle rod, and can be conueyed into the forme of a truncheon, and worne in the hand like a walking staffe vntill they come to their purpose, and then they let it out at the length, and hook or curb whatsoeuer is lose and within the reach, and then he conueies it to the warp, and from thence (as they list) their snappings go to the Broker or to the Bawd, and there they haue as readie money for it, as marchantes haue for their ware in the exchange: beside, there is a Diuer, which is in the verie nature of the Curber, for as he puts in a hooke, so the other puts in at the windowe some litle figging boy, who plaies his part notably, & perhaps the youth is so wel instructed, that he is a scholler in the black art, and can picke a lock if it be not too crosse warded, & deliuer to the Diuer what snappinges he finds in the chamber. Thus you heare what the Curber doth and the Diuer, and what inconuenience growes to many by their base villanies: therfore I wish all menseruants and maids, to be carefull for their maisters commodities, & to leaue no loose ends abroad, especially in chambers where windows open to the streete, least the Curber take them as snappings, and conuey them to the cosning broker. Let this suffise, and nowe I will recreate your wits with a merry tale or two.

## Of a Courber, and how cunningly he was taken.

IT fortuned of late that a Courber and his Warp went walking in the dead of the night to spie out some window open for their purpose, and by chaunce came by a noblemans house

about

about London, and saw the windowe of the Porters lodge open, and looking in, spied fat snappinges, and bade his Warpe watch carefully, for there woulde be purchase, and with that tooke his Courbe, and thrust it into the chamber, and the Porter lying in his bed, was awake and sawe all, and so was hys bedfellow that was yeomã of the wineseller. The porter stole out of his bed to see what woulde be done: the first snapping the courber light on was his liuery coate: as he was drawing it vnto the window, the porter easily lifted it off, & so the courber drew his hooke in vaine, the whilest his bedfellowe stole out of the chamber, and raised vp two or three more, and wēt about to take them, but still the roague plyed his businesse, and lighted on a gowne that he vsed to sit in in the porters lodge, and warily drew it, but when it came to the window, the porter drew it off so lightly, that the hooker perceiued it not: then when he sawe his courbe woulde take no holde, he swore and chafte, and told the Warpe he had hold of two good snaps, yet mist them both, and that the fault was in the courbe: then he fell to sharping and hammering of the hooks, to make it holde better, and in againe he thrusts it, and lightes vppon a payre of buffe hose: but when he had drawne them to the window, the porter tooke them off againe, which made the courber almost mad, and swore he thought the diuel was abroad to night he had such hard fortune: nay sayes the yeoman of the seller, there is three abroad, and we are come to fetch you and your hookes to hell: so they apprehended these base rogues and carried them into the Porters lodge and made that their prison. In the morning a crue of Gentlemen in the houses, sate for Iudges (in that they woulde not trouble their Lord with such filthie Caterpillers) and by them they were found guiltie, and condemned to abide fortie blowes apeece with a bastinado, which they had solemnly paid, and so went away without any further damage.

## Of the subtiltie of a Courber in coosening a Maid.

A Merry iest and a subtile, was reported to me of a cunning Courber, who had apparreld himselfe maruellous braue, like some good welfauoured yong Gentleman, & in stead of a man had his Warp to wait vpon him: this smoth faced rogue

comes

comes into more fields, and caused his man to carry a pottle of Ipocras vnder his cloke, and there had learned out amongst others that was drying of cloaths, of a very wel fauoured maid that was there with her Flasket of linnen, what her Maister was, wher she dwelt, and what her name: hauing gotten this intelligence, to this maid he goes, courteously salutes her, and after some pretie chat, tels her how hee saw her sundrie times at her Maisters doore, and was so besotted with her beautie, ỹ he had made inquirie what her qualities were, which by the neighbours he generally heard to bee so vertuous, that his desire was the more inflamed, and therupon in signe of good wil, and in further acquaintance, hee had brought her a pottle of Ipocras: the maid seeing him a good proper man, tooke it very kindly, and thankt him, and so they drunke the wine, and after a little louers prattle, for that time they parted.

The maids hart was set on fire, that a Gentleman was become a suter to her, and she began to thinke better of her selfe then euer she did before, and waxed so proud that her other suters were counted too base for her & there might be none welcome but this newcom gentlemã her louer: wel, diuers times they appointed mætings, that they grew very familiar, and he oftentimes would com to her Maisters house, when al but she & her fellow maids were in bed, so that he and the Warpe his man did almost knowe euery corner of the house: it fortuned that so long he dallied, that at length he ment earnest, but not to marry the maid whatsoeuer he had done els, and comming into the fields to her on a washing day, saw a mighty deale of fine Linnen worth 20. pound as he coniectured: wherupon he thought this night to set downe his rest, and therefore he was very pleasant with his louer, and told her that that night after her Maister and mistres were in bed, he would come, & bring a bottle of Sacke with him and drinke with her, the maid glad at these newes, promised to sit vp for him and so they parted: till about ten a clocke at night, when he came and brought his man with him, and one other Courber with his tooles, who should stand without the doores: to be briefe, welcom he came, & so welcome as a man might be to a maid: hee that had more mind to spy the clothes, then to look on her fauour, at last perciu ecd

ceiued then in a Parlor that stood to the street-ward, and there would the maid haue had him sit, no sweeting quoth he, it is too néere the street, we can neither laugh nor be merry, but euerie one that passeth by must hear vs: vpon that they remoued into another rome and pleasant they were, and tippled the Seche round, til all was out, and the gentleman swore that he would haue another pottle, and so sent his man, who tolde the other Courber that stood without, where the window was he should worke at, and away goes he for more secke and brings it very orderly, & then to their cups they fall againe, while the courber without had not left one rag of linnen behinde. Late it grew, and the morning began to wax gray, and away goes this curber and his man, leauing the maid very pleasant with his flattering promises vntill such time as more foule, shee went into the Parlor, and mist all her mistres Linnen, then what a sorrowfull hart she had, I refer to them that haue greeued at the like losse.

## The Discouerie of the blacke Art.

THe Black Art is picking of Locks, and to this busie trade two persons are required, the Charme and the Stand, the Charm is he that doth the feat, and the Stand is he that watcheth: there be more that do belong to the burglary for conuaing away the goods, but only two are imploid about the lock: the charme hath many keies and wrests, which they cal picklocks, and for euery sundry fashion they haue a sundry terme, but I am ignorant of their words of art, and therefore I omit them, onely this, they haue such cunning in opening a Locke, that they will vndo the hardest lock though neuer so wel warded, euen while a man may turn his back: some haue their instruments from Italy made of steele, some are made heere by Smiths that are partakers in their villanous occupatiõs: but howsoeuer, well may it be called the blacke art, for the Deuill cannot do better then they in their faculty. I once saw the experience of it my selfe, for being in the Counter vpon cõmandement, there came in a famous fellowe in the blacke Art, as strong in that quality as Samson: The party now is dead, and by fortune died in his bed, I hearing ỳ he was a charme began

to enter familiarity with him, and to haue an insight into hys art, after some acquaintance, he told me much, and one day being in my chamber I shewed him my Deske, and askt him if he could picke that little lock that was so wel warded, & so little as I thought for any of his gins. Why sir saies he, I am so experienced in the black Art, that if I do but blow vpon ỳ lock, it shall fly open, and therefore let me come to your Deske, & do but turne fiue times about, and you shal see my cunning, with that I did as hee bad me, and ere I had turned fiue times, his hand was rifling in my Deske very orderly, I wondred at it, and thought verily that the Deuil and his dam was in his fingers, much discommodity growes by this blacke art in shops & noble mens houses for their plate, therefore are they most seuerely to be lookt into by the honourable and Worshipfull of England, and to end this discourse as pleasantly as the rest, I wil reherse you a true tale done by a most Worshipful knight in Lancashire against a Tincker that professed the black art.

## A true and merry tale of a Knight and a Tincker that was a Picklocke.

NOt far off from Bolton in the moors, there dwelled an ancient Knight, who for curtesie & hospitality was famous in those parts: diuers of his Tenaunts making repaire to his house, offered diuers complaints to him, how their locks were pickt in the night, and diuers of them vtterlye vndone by that meanes, and who it should bee they could not tell, onely they suspected a Tinker that went about the Countrey, and in all places did spend very lauishly: the Knight willingly heard what they exhibited, and promised both redresse and reuenge, if he or they could learne out the man. It chanced not long after their complaints, but this iolly Tinker (so expert in the black art) came by the house of this Knight, as the old gentleman was walking before the gate and cried for worke, the Knight straight cõiecturing this should be that famous rogue that did so much hurt to his Tenants, cald in and askt if they had any worke for the Tinker, the cooke answered there was three or foure old kettles to mend, come in Tinker, so this fellow

low came in, laid down his budget & fell to his worke. a black Jacke of beere for the tinker sais the Knight, I know tinkers haue dry soules: the tinker hee was pleasant and thankt him humbly, the Knight sat downe with him and fell a ransacking his budget, and asked wherefore this tole serued and wherefore that, the tinker told him all, at last as he tumbled among his old brasse, the Knight spied 3. or 4. bunches of picklocks, he turnd them ouer quickly as though hee had not seene them, and said, wel tinker I warrant thou art a passing cunning fellow and well skild in thine occupation by the store of thy tols thou hast in thy budget: in faith if it please your worship quoth he, I am thanks be to God my crafts master: I, so much I perceiue that thou art a passing cunning fellow quoth the Knight therefore let vs haue a fresh iacke of beere and that of the best and strongest for the tinker: thus he past away the time pleasantly, and when hee had done his worke he asked what hee would haue for his paines: but two shillings of your worship quoth the tinker: two shillings saies the Knight, alas tinker it is too little, for I see by thy tooles thou art a passing cunning workeman, hold there is 2. shillings, come in thou shalt drink a cup of wine before thou goest, but I pray thee tell mee which way traueleſt thou: faith sir quoth the tinker all is one to me, I am not much out of my way whereſoeuer I go, but nowe I am going to Lancaster: I pray thee Tinker then quoth the K. carry me a letter to the Jailor, for I sent in a fellon thither the other day, and I would send word to the Jailor he should take no bale for him, mary that I wil in most dutifull maner quoth he, and much more for your worship then that: giue him a cup of wine quoth the Knight, and sirrha (speaking to his Clarke) make a letter to the Jailor, but then he whispered to him and bad him make a mittimus to send the tinker to prison, ỹ clark answered he knew not his name, Ile make him tel it thee him selfe saies the Knight, and therefore fall you to your pen: the Clarke began to write his mitimus, and the Knight began to aske what countrey man he was, where he dwelt, what was his name, the tinker told him all, and the Clarke set it in with this prouiso to the Jailor, that he should kepe him fast bolted or els he would breake away. Assone as the mittimus was

made, sealed, & subscribed in forme of a letter, the Knight took it and deliuered it to the Tinker and said, giue this to the chiefe Iailor of Lancaster, and here is two shillings more for thy labour, so the tinker took the letter and the mony, and with manis a cap and knée thanked the olde Knight and departed: and made hast till he came at Lancaster, and staid not in the towne so much as to tast one cup of nappy Ale, before hee came to the Iailor, and to him very briefly he deliuered his letter, the Iailor tooke it and read it, and smilde a good, and said tinker thou art welcome for such a Knights sake, he bids me giue thée the best intertainment I may, I sir quoth the Tinker, the knight loues me well, but I pray you hath the courteous Gentleman remembred such a poore man as I? I marry doth he Tinker, and therefore sirra quoth he to one of his men, take the tinker into the lowest ward, clap a strong paire of bolts on his héeles and a ballill of 28. pound weight, and then sirra sée if your picklocks will serue the turne to bale you hence: at this the tinker was blank, but yet hee thought the Iailor had but iested: but when he heard the Mittimus, his heart was cold, and had not a word to say, his conscience accused him, and there hee lay while the next Sessions, and was hanged at Lancaster, and all his skill in the black Art could not serue him.

FINIS.